

REMARKS

The undersigned attorney, on behalf of the applicants and for himself, thanks Examiner Prone for participating in a telephone conference today March 19, 2007 with the undersigned attorney. Although no final agreement was reached, the conversation was helpful and appreciated.

1. A replacement sheet for the drawings was included with applicants' November 27, 2006 response to correct FIG. 4. In FIG. 4 as filed originally (informal) reference numeral 42 was included. The formal version of FIG. 4 subsequently entered inadvertently did not include reference numeral 42. FIG. 4 within the replacement sheet includes the reference numeral 42.

2. Claims 33 and 35 are objected to because of certain informalities.

In claim 33, the Examiner objects to the phrase "follow unguided multi-directional patterns". Applicants have amended claim 33 to address the Examiner's objection. However, to properly address the Examiner's objection, applicants respectfully submit that the entire clause in question must be considered. In its amended form, the clause reads as follows: "*wherein the cutting blade and the manner in which it is mounted on the handle permits the rotary cutter to travel a multi-directional path across the thin sheet material*". The clause contains functional language that defines the manner in which the cutting blade is mounted on the handle; i.e., in a manner that permits the rotary cutter to travel a multi-directional path across the thin sheet material. The acceptability of functional claim language is well established. None of the references of record disclose or suggest a hand-held rotary cutter so defined. Consequently, applicants respectfully request the Examiner withdraw this objection.

In claim 35, the Examiner objects to the phrase "the cutting blade to be manually maneuvered in a directionally unrestricted manner". Applicants have amended claim 35 to address the Examiner's objection. Here again, applicants respectfully submit that the entire clause in question must be considered. The clause reads as follows: "*wherein the handle is operable to permit the cutting blade to travel in a directionally unrestricted*

path across the thin sheet material.” The clause contains functional language that defines the physical relationship between the cutting blade and the handle; i.e., the handle is operable to permit the rotary cutter to travel a directionally unrestricted path across the thin sheet material. The acceptability of functional claim language is well established. None of the references of record disclose or suggest a hand-held rotary cutter so defined. Consequently, applicants respectfully request the Examiner withdraw this objection.

4. Claims 33 and 35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,733,472 (“Belcourt”).

Claims 33 and 35 have been amended to recite that the circular cutting blade has first and second edge surfaces that are symmetrical about the cutting edge. Applicants respectfully submit that Belcourt does not disclose or suggest such a cutting blade.

For at least these reasons, applicants respectfully submit that the rotary cutter of claims 33 and 35 is patentable over and not anticipated by Belcourt.

As applicants have traversed the objection and rejections raised by the Examiner, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner withdraw the stated objection and rejection, allow claims 33 and 35, and pass the present application on to issuance. Applicants do not believe any fee is due herewith. In the event a fee is due, however, please charge our Deposit Account No. 50-3381.

In addition, the undersigned attorney is available to discuss the present application at the Examiner’s convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

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